



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Populist Caucus Urges House Leadership to Include Public Option in Healthcare Reform Bill

Washington, DC – Today 17 members of the House Populist Caucus released a letter sent to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer urging the inclusion of a public health insurance option in the healthcare reform bill.

“The public option is an effective compromise and stands as a middle road to health care reform, allowing citizens who enjoy their current coverage to keep private insurance, while providing a quality, lower cost alternative to interested citizens,” the letter reads.

“We urgently need to fix our broken healthcare system,” said **Populist Caucus Chair Bruce Braley**. “We need to pass real, meaningful reform that reduces the ever-growing burden of healthcare costs on middle class families. Including a public health insurance in the final healthcare reform plan will force insurance companies to compete and drive costs down.”

The Populist Caucus is the only caucus in Congress devoted solely to addressing middle class economic issues. Made up of 28 members from across the US, the Populist Caucus works to bring members of Congress together around key middle class issues.

The text of the letter follows; a signed copy is attached.

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
H-107, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

Thank you for your leadership as we work towards comprehensive healthcare reform. As members of the Populist Caucus, we write in support of a strong public option as a vital part of any healthcare reform bill that is passed by the House. This option should compete on a level playing field with private insurance, maintain a minimum standard of benefits, provide quality care, reimburse providers equitably and adequately, and address current geographic disparities.

Over the past decade, increasing healthcare costs have outpaced inflation, raising costs and lowering the quality of life for many American families who struggle to afford their medical care. The House's work to date on healthcare reform is commendable and shows promise at fixing a system which will only grow more expensive and less responsive to the needs of patients if unchecked. To ensure a check on the current system, and to have maximum effect, any healthcare reform considered by the House should contain a public option.

The public option is an effective compromise and stands as a middle road to health care reform, allowing citizens who enjoy their current coverage to keep private insurance, while providing a quality, lower cost alternative to interested citizens.

Once more we ask that you take the necessary steps to include a strong public option in any healthcare legislation brought before the House. Thank you again for your continued leadership and please feel free to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Bruce Braley, Chairman, Populist Caucus
Peter DeFazio, Vice-Chair, Populist Caucus
Keith Ellison, Vice Chair, Populist Caucus
Betty Sutton, Vice Chair, Populist Caucus
Bob Filner
Leonard Boswell
Jan Schakowsky
Michael Michaud
Lloyd Doggett
Phil Hare
Hank Johnson
Steve Kagen
David Loebsack
Carol Shea-Porter
Peter Welch
John Yarmuth
Eric Massa

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